

Minutes of the Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council meeting held on Monday 10th June 2024 in Aldington Village Hall at 7:30pm.

Present: Councillors; L Harman (Chair), R Boulding, L Guy, H Stebbings, G Taylor, S Wagstaff and J Weatherall.

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk.

Also present 2 Residents and P New (Neighbourhood Watch)

1455. Apologies for Absence:

Councillor P Hannabuss.

1456. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

1457. Sellindge Synchronous Condenser:

Welsh Power have provided the following update:

- Site Earthworks continuing to prepare the final site platform level, in brief that is the continuation of removing earth to establish the final ground level of the site. You will see large amounts of spoil storage, this will later be used for the sites screening bund and to finalise site levels.
- Stone deliveries will start next week, we are expecting 50 deliveries a day for approximately 7 days. A watchman will be in place for this at the Roman Road junction.
- With reference to the above, all drivers have been briefed, a toolbox talk has been carried out regarding correct access routes and a gateman will also be in place to manage traffic.
- The site stone will be used as a platform base and will see the continued use of heavy site machinery.

1458. Public Participation:

There were no public submissions.

1459. Neighbourhood Watch:

Report attached.

1460. Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:

Following re-election of Cllr. Noel Ovenden as Leader of the Council on May 16th, Selection and Constitution Committee sat on 30th May to confirm membership and Chairs of the various Committees and Task Groups that make up the Council. I continue with my Planning, Housing Delivery and Communication Portfolio. In addition, I now Chair the Local Plan & Policy Task Group, Local Government and Polling Districts Task Group and Standards Committee.

It will come as no surprise that the main topic of conversation at Council over the last week has been the bins contract. Having previously said many times that our Parish had done okay during the contractor take over, I was of course made to regret my

words. The last few weeks have been mayhem in Aldington, Bonnington and Bilsington. Suffice to say that the Environment team are very aware. Routes have been revised and trucks changed to hopefully get everything back on track. The digital platforms that link the ABC website to the Suez systems have also been improved and thoroughly checked so that they now reflect the correct collection day. A few households have had their normal collection day changed as part of the routes review. This represents 4 % of households in the borough. Those households will all be notified by letter. I am aware of at least one household in Aldington that has received this letter, moving their revised Friday collection back to Wednesday – which remains the normal collection day for most of the village.

Like everyone in Aldington – I have my fingers crossed for Wednesday

1461. Minutes:

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

1462. Chairman's Report:

The focus this month has mainly been on events. Its been a busy month, one way or another. The WI/ Parish Council team at the Wednesday Hub hosted a significant birthday lunch for Brenda Kemp that was attended by her some of her family as well as village friends. It was an absolute pleasure to honour Brenda as she, alongside Peter, contributed so much to our community in the past. Last week we had the D-Day anniversary so had a Wartime-themed luncheon at the Hub, which was extremely well attended and the spam sandwiches brought forth a lot of sharing of memories. This was of course followed by the Beacon lighting last Thursday. I'd like to thank Colin for his help in making the area safe, Rod Gibbs for providing the wood to burn and filling the beacon and the Aldington firemen for performing the lighting ceremony and ensuring the beacon burned out safely.

The Waste Electrical event held on Saturday was also a huge success. The Ashford Repair Centre team were again onsite. We had a good attendance. I discovered that Aldington Primary School are enrolled in a scheme whereby they collect used batteries as a fund raiser. I'd like to suggest that we should look into having a receptacle that we can put out in the Wednesday Hub for people to deposit into.

Cllr. Hanabuss and I attended the Kent Association of Local Councils Ashford Branch meeting. A new Chair was elected, which is now Peter Barker of Great Chart Parish Council. Paul Bartlett, in his Singleton & Finberry Parish role, was elected Vice Chair.

We heard back from the Planning Inspectorate on our Neighbourhood Plan – but more about that when we reach the item on the agenda.

1463. Solar:

Report received from the Aldington and Mersham Support Group attached.

The community meeting that was planned for the 19th June has been cancelled as it has been indicated that the proposal will not be publicly available until it has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate which could be 28 days after submission.

1464. Finance:

Schedule of payments:

Payee	Purpose	Amount
Staff costs		£3,195.77
Aldington Village Hall	Room hire	£112.50
Harmer & Sons	Grounds maintenance	£990.00
Adonis Blue	Woodland survey	£630.00
L Harman	Reimbursement	£35.18

Resolved:

1. To receive and authorise the payment of the items of expenditure.
2. To authorise the transfer of £5,000 from deposit account to current account.

1465. Financial Regulations:

Report ABPC/24/007 has been compiled as a result of the Model Financial Regulations issued by the National Association of Local Councils being revised to reflect changes in legislation and procedure.

Resolved:

1. To receive and note **Report ABPC/24/007**
2. To receive and adopt the **Financial Regulations attached to the report.**

1466. Planning Committee:

The committee considered one application which was for a garage, log store and storage room at Handen Farm whilst there was no objection a condition was requested that the structures are to be ancillary to the domestic building and not used as accommodation at any time.

1467. Neighbourhood Plan:

As mentioned in the Chair's Report the Planning Inspector has issued his initial report which has a number of suggested amendments. These will be incorporated into the plan and a full proof read undertaken. It is anticipated that the referendum on the plan will be held towards the end of the summer.

1468. Highways:

Automated traffic surveys are currently being undertaken on Roman Road, Calleywell Lane and Goldwell Lane. These are taking place over a four week period, the results of the surveys will inform the Parish Council when responding to planning applications.

The position of the survey on Roman Road was questioned as it does not capture traffic from Knoll Hill to Goldwell Lane as many of the parents bring children to the school from this end turn and return without passing through the data capture point. A request is to be made to Kent Highways to consider repositioning.

1469. Events Committee:

The next scheduled event is the Fete on 10th August, the committee are due to meet shortly to draw up plans.

1470. Quarry Wood:

Report ABPC/24/008 brings to the Parish Council the draft Woodland Survey / Management Recommendations for Biodiversity submitted by Adonis Blue Environmental Consultants.

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note Report ABPC/24/008.**
- 2. To share the woodland survey/Management Recommendations for Biodiversity with Led by the Wild.**
- 3. To arrange a meeting with Led by the Wild to determine the next steps.**

Councillor Stebbings left the meeting.

1471. Quarry Field and Pond:

There is evidence that rubbish has been thrown into the pond, the handyman is to be asked to see if he can remove it. Councillor Weatherall spoke about clearing the parrot weed from the pond and the need for volunteers. The Chair requested that contact be made with Darren Gooden to see if he has the necessary equipment to mechanically remove the weed, and if so to quote for the job.

1472. Aldington Meadows:

It has been noted that there is a dip in the ground level below the Zip wire, the contractor is to be asked to fill this in. The old tennis court is becoming overgrown with vegetation again the contractor is to be contacted to obtain an update on progress with the project.

1473. War Memorial:

Nothing to report.

1474. Items for information:

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:05pm

REPORT TO ALDINGTON & BONNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL JUNE 2024

This month my report will verbally update you and reflect progress on my 2024 NHW plan to date. I put that plan to council at the start of the year and as we start to ease past the halfway point of the year it is important to check progress to date.

I feel NHW and the working partnership with council is very strong and will continue to grow.

Two issues I will discuss at council will be the Ashford Police Establishment and working of the new policing model which was launched almost exactly one year ago in June 2023.

What was the police establishment and working model then. What is it now?

What has been the attendance at Council meetings in that 12 month? I think a Beat officer should attend once every 3 months according to the PCC.

The other matter of concern to me and is raised at most public engagement meetings is the difference between Ashford Police dealing of e-scooter problems and the rest of the Kent Police, examples provided.

I am on record of saying there needs to be the 2024/2025 debate and with proper rules and regulations those vehicles may well feature in a greener transport policy/strategy. However, at present in the Ashford District the engagement and education strategy appear out of step with the rest of Kent and causing anger and confusion with residents.

E-scooters – are you breaking the law?

Can I ride my e-scooter to school or work?
No, it's illegal...
E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles and are required to be taxed and insured. It's not possible to get insurance for privately owned e-scooters, which means it's illegal to use them.

Can I ride my e-scooter on the pavement?
No, it's illegal...
You cannot use e-scooters on public footpaths, cycle lanes or roads.

What happens if I'm caught using my e-scooter in public spaces?
The scooter may be seized and as a result, destroyed.
If stopped by an officer, you may be asked to complete a breath and drugs test. You also risk a £300 fine and six penalty points on your licence for no insurance.

Kent Police
Think before you buy:
The number of electrical scooters being used on our streets has risen, as well as reports of serious injury and fatalities.
For more information and advice on the use of e-scooters visit www.kent.police.uk/road-safety

e-scooters – know the law

What you need to know

e-scooters are classed as Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEVs), which means they are treated as motor vehicles and subject to the same legal requirements, such as driving licence, insurance, number plates, lighting, road tax, crash helmets etc.

Without these, e-scooters cannot be used legally on the road.

The Government is currently trialling the use of approved rental e-scooters as environmentally friendly modes of transport in some specific locations in the UK.

For the rest of the country, under current law, e-scooters can only be used on private land.



What should I do now?

It's our priority to keep you and other road users safe. We are obliged to take action against anyone who is caught repeatedly using an e-scooter illegally or in a way that causes a nuisance to others. In these circumstances we have the power to seize the e-scooter under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act/165 of the Road Traffic Act – and we'd really prefer not to.

Please make sure you only use your e scooter on private land.

For more information about powered transporters and the law, visit www.gov.uk



Kent Police

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DRAFT

E-scooters seized during Dartford event

Policing news

✓ Published: 14:25 07/06/2024



Some of the seized e-scooters

Ten e-scooters have been seized by officers during a joint event in **Dartford**.

On **Wednesday 29** and **Friday 31 May 2024**, officers were deployed in the **High Street** alongside cadets and staff representing Dartford Council.

The teams were there as part of ongoing work to inform the public about the updated Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in the town.

While there members of the public were able to talk to them about local issues as well as give their support for their work on tackling e-scooters in the town.

The PSPO has been in place in the town centre since 2017 and was introduced to tackle anti-social behaviour. The order was amended in February this year to include a restriction on riding e-scooters in the main pedestrian area of the town centre.

The order can be enforced by council staff as well as Kent Police officers.

While the constables were in the town centre they seized 10 e-scooters which were seen being ridden illegally.

Kent Police issued six traffic offence reports to some of the riders alongside council staff who issued five fixed penalty notices for breaching the PSPO.

Dartford Community Safety Unit Inspector Lee Cheesman said:

'It is illegal to use e-scooters in public spaces and not only poses a danger to members of the public but can also cause injury to the rider.'

'Kent Police continues to work with partner agencies to ensure that Dartford remains a safe, pleasant and vibrant town to visit, and we will not tolerate any anti-social behaviour. We will continue to take a robust stance on anyone intent on causing issues in the town.'

Clampdown leads to seizure of 30 e-scooters in Maidstone

Policing news

Published: 14:27 06/02/2024



Thirty electric scooters have been seized as part of an ongoing clampdown on their illegal use in **Maidstone**.

Seven of the e-scooters have already been destroyed, during targeted action by officers to identify and stop riders seen in town centre roads and other public areas.

It is currently against the law to use e-scooters on public streets, pavements, or cycle lanes.

They are only permitted on private land, with the landowner's permission, and in parts of the country where the Government has permitted trials.

Since 10 December 2023, patrols have been making proactive checks across several areas of Maidstone town centre, following concerns over the safety of riders, as well as pedestrians including elderly people.

Those found breaking the law have been stopped in places including **Lower Stone Street, Palace Avenue, Tonbridge Road, Gabriel's Hill and King Street**.

Pedestrianised areas such as **Week Street** have also been targeted, where eight e-scooters have been seized.

Hazards and consequences

Maidstone Chief Inspector Mark McLellan said: 'The dangerous, illegal, and inappropriate use of e-scooters can pose serious risks to the safety of older and vulnerable pedestrians, and they are also a hazard to other road users, such as cyclists and motorists.'

'At the end of last year, our officers led a month-long campaign in Maidstone to raise awareness with the public about legislation surrounding the use of e-scooters.'

'We are continuing to stop riders to give advice and reminders around the current legislation, and anyone who is found to have ignored previous warnings faces being fined and having their e-scooters seized and destroyed.'

These will be two of the issues that I will be focused on towards the start of the second period of 2024. I do not anticipate these questions being warmly received by Ashford Police.

**Thank you for your support.
Peter**

**Peter New
Community Neighbourhood Watch**

Aldington and Mersham Support Group (AMSG) Report
Parish Council Meeting 10.06.24 004

1. ABC's decision to Refuse the EDF application last month was welcome news. The efforts of the Church Lane Group over the last three years of lobbying with a consistent message clearly resonated with the planning office. Critically, ABC pointed to the inappropriateness of siting Solar on hills – least of all Bested Hill.
2. The Parish Council - and particularly those involved in the Neighbourhood Plan should also be thanked for the provisions within that document which were cited by the planning officer.
3. Despite the submission we made to ABC on 31st January this year regarding the inadequacies of EPL's consultation process, we understand that they do not propose to contest the consultation process a second time.
4. The obligations placed on a DCO applicant are not solely related to the number and sequencing of information events they undertake. Nor about having a website set up which can be accessed for information. It is not just a process. The Act requires an applicant to provide sufficient information to the community such that it can make informed comments and make some input into the design of the scheme.
5. We hope that ABC will keep an open mind on the issue pending sight of the application and compare its content alongside that which was provided to the community during the consultation phase before responding to PINS, as they will be invited to do as Consultee.
6. EPL has been advising of a delay to its expected submission date since the autumn last year. When we last reported with our 003 report for your March meeting, they were then anticipating submission in "mid-April". After months and months of delay, it is now expected prior to the 20th of this month.
7. In anticipation of this, we have arranged the second of our Community Meetings (the first was at Mersham Hall on 4th April this year) at Aldington Village Hall for 7.30pm on 19th June. Not only do we feel it important to increase the community's awareness of what is going on but, on the assumption the application arrives prior to this date, we will be able to give the community the earliest possible update on key aspects. This meeting will give those that made representations during the Consultation an early indication as to the extent to which their concerns have been listened to and the extent to which the applicant has amended plans since we last saw their proposed scheme 10 months ago.
8. This meeting will allow us to once again gauge from the feedback and questions we receive, those areas which are of most concern to those in both parishes. We will therefore be fully up to date when Jonathan Tennant (representing AMSG) attends the CPL the following evening. In the event that EPL once more decide to delay submission of their application beyond the date of our proposed meeting we will regrettably have to reschedule.

1. The Community Meeting will also allow us to give advance notice of the workshop which Linda suggested would be useful to convene at the point PINS invite registration of interested parties. Those who might have difficulty registering online can be assisted at this event. AMMSG look forward to being involved in that workshop in any way that may be helpful.
2. We have maintained our close contact with CPRE over recent months and have recently had confirmation from them that they will kindly provide us with help from their in-house Planner and also their Ecologist (Vicky Ellis). Both have been involved with the Cleve Hill solar scheme. As previously reported, CPRE are very supportive of what we are doing and take the view, perhaps above all else, that it is “almost impossible” to mitigate the impact of these schemes when elements are located on a *hillside*.
3. Our website has been up and running now since early April and the number of people registering is increasing. The site provides details about the scheme as well as latest news items relevant to Solar - particularly in the locality. There is now a regular item - “Competency Corner” - which highlights curious and sometimes concerning aspects of EPL’s design on which we invite comment.
4. As we have indicated from the outset (and is clear from the name of our support group) we maintain that in order to stand the best chance of contesting EPL’s proposals it is essential that both villages are working together towards the same goal. Better still that they are working in alignment with ABC as the local planning authority and in this instance, as Consultee.
5. If your council shares this view, please can we meet with you as soon as possible to discuss how best to achieve this unity of purpose and the role that AMMSG can play?
6. We recognise that we are a stand-alone support group and have no official “democratic mandate” beyond the support we have generated for the work we are doing. However, we believe that it is a reasonable expectation of both communities that the best possible “home team” with the appropriate skill sets (and outside professional expertise as well) should be assembled to contest EPL’s proposals at the Examination.
7. The closest example of this collaborative approach which we think would work best is the “Village Alliance” model at Mersham (Linda Arthur) – a group that works closely with and assists the Parish Council on specific planning applications that stand to impact the parish. We will be inviting both Linda Arthur and Gavin Murphy (Chair of Mersham Parish Council) to our meeting on 19th June.

We look forward to your response.